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The Religious Element in the "Comedias de moros y cristianos" of the Golden Age. G. I. DALE: Washington University Studies, Vol. VII, Humanistic Series, pp. 31-46, 1919.

In this study the author points out that, to the Spaniards of the day, the main theme of interest in the *comedias de moros y cristianos* was the defeat of the Moor and his ever-present request for baptism at the end of the play. In ending the plays in this manner the authors were yielding to the popular demand: the subject of the plays was usually a struggle between Moors and Christians, and by having the defeated Moors request baptism "satisfaction was rendered both to the Church and to the popular audience." The author notes that there is some humor in such plays as Luis Vélez de Guevara's *Los sucesos en Orán*, and in Manuel de León and Diego Calleja's *Las Dos Estrellas de Francia* (ca. 1660; cf. pp. 42-43) in those scenes which deal with the baptism; we infer that the earlier plays had not been in so light a vein as these when treating the subject of baptism.

Professor Dale defines this type of play thus: "The term *comedia de moros y cristianos* has been applied to those plays in Spanish which contain characters representing Moors and Christians" (p. 31). Does he mean those plays in which the principal characters represent Moors and Christians? If so, that would make more nearly correct the statement (p. 33) that "the *Isabela* of Lupercio Leonardo de Argensola is "one of the first *comedias* containing Moorish characters." Lupercio Leonardo de Argensola was born, according to Fitzmaurice-Kelly (*Historia de la literatura española*, Madrid, 1913, p. 233), in 1559, and consequently his *Isabela* was probably written in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, say 1580, or later.

Without attempting to be exhaustive,¹ the following plays which have Moors as characters antedate the *Isabela*: the *Armelina* of Lope de Rueda (1510?-65), *Obras* (Madrid, 1908, I, 129 ff.), and the *Farsa de la iglesia* of Diego Sánchez de Badajoz (flourished 1525-47), *Recopilación*, II, 192-95. If, as appears probable,² the *negro* was confused with the *moro* in the early Spanish drama (cf. English *blackamoor*), then we have many plays of this foreign type. A few examples are: Gil Vicente (d. 1539 or 1557), *Obras* (Lisbon, 1843, II, 332-41); Lope de Rueda, *Obras* (I, 76-85, 178-87; II, 101-7); Diego Sánchez de Badajoz, *Recopilación* (I, 111-35; II, 77-87 [*negro* fights with *pastor* and has to be told to stop, pp. 84-85], 123-28 [*negro* and *pastor* quarrel, the *negro* is again told to stop, p. 126], 224-25, 242-51).

Professor Dale is very probably correct in concluding (p. 34) that the defeat and baptism of the Moors in these *comedias* were not due to the drama of the time being "on its good behavior in order to meet with the favor of

¹ The reviewer is making a study of the early Spanish drama, which he expects to publish later. This study will include the foreign types.

² The question of the confusion of the *negro* and *moro* will be treated in the study mentioned in the preceding note.

the Church." When we recall the earlier plays, those of Sánchez de Badajoz, for example, who persistently attacked the priests, we do not think it likely that the church's opinion was the deciding factor.

With reference to what Professor Dale says (pp. 42-43) about humor in the baptismal scenes, as noted above, and his statement (p. 41) that "the baptism of Moorish characters on the stage never reaches beyond the mere verbal request of the individual," the following passage may be quoted from Diego Sánchez de Badajoz, *Farsa de la iglesia* (the *moro* has been invited to be baptized):

| | |
|--|--|
| <i>Moro:</i> Puex yo querex batixar. | Aqui desaparece la Sinagoga, y el Pastor |
| <i>Pastor:</i> Da, mora, una poca de agua. | bautiza al Moro. |
| (This to <i>Sinagoga</i>) | <i>Pastor:</i> Nombre del Padre y del Hijo |
| <i>Sinag.:</i> Mira, moro, lo que dices, | Y del Espíritu Santo, |
| No consentas, que te pierdes, | Te bautizo sin letijo, |
| Ta, ta, ta, no te batices. | Pues que Dios en tí her quijo |
| <i>Pastor:</i> Heros he yo las narices. | Misterio de tanto espanto. |
| <i>Moro:</i> Dexi vos la que qixer dex. | <i>Moro:</i> Cristiano xura á San Juan. |
| <i>Pastor:</i> Véisla, véisla bautizada. | <i>Pastor:</i> ¿Pues reniegas de Mahoma? |
| <i>Sinag.:</i> Mientes, mientes, queno quiero. | <i>Moro:</i> Xí. |
| ¡Ay triste desventurada! | <i>Pastor:</i> ¿Tambien del Alcorán? |
| <i>Pastor:</i> No cureis, ya estais mojada; | <i>Moro:</i> Xí, tambien de sacristan. |
| Duna puta, viejo cuero. | <i>Pastor:</i> No, no, no, son de Sodoma. |
| <i>Sinag.:</i> No quiero, juro al talmud, | <i>Moro:</i> Sacristan, tambien renega |
| No quiero, sedme testigos. | Que hurtar lex é manteca, |
| <i>Pastor:</i> Nunca Dios te dé salud, | Y andar rabo de borrega |
| Cuero viejo sin virtud, | [Recopilación, II, 194-95]. |
| Vaya con los enemigos. | |

It is clear that both the *Moro* and *Sinagoga* are baptized, and that a heavy humor pervades the scene. The *Sinagoga* is called *mora*, which is an indication of the confusion of the *moro* and *negro*, as referred to above.

Professor Dale concludes his study by giving three categories into which these plays may be divided: "Either the Moorish enemy is defeated, a miracle has been performed by the Virgin or by the image of the Christ, or the Moorish character seeks the Christian faith because he finds himself enamored of one of the opposite belief" (p. 44). In these plays he finds the element of hostility, which is also to be observed in the plays noted in this review with reference to foreign types.

The author has given us a very interesting essay; he would have spared his readers some trouble if he had given more exact references to the plays quoted or referred to, their dates or approximate dates, and had listed the authors of the plays at least once in the study.

W. S. HENDRIX

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS